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11 JUN 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT: EDIC Sponsored Briefing on High-Energy Fuels

1. A "Propellants Seminar," sponsored by EDIC, in cooperation with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Development, is scheduled for 13-14 June in the CIA Briefing Room, 117 Central Building. The purpose of the "seminar" is to brief intelligence officers and US officials with economic defense responsibilities on materials and equipment required for the new development of missile propellants and other high-energy fuels. The presentation will be made by officers from two government contract groups, the Battelle Memorial Institute and the Solid Propellant Information Agency. A transcript of the proceedings will be made.
2. This briefing is part of the general approach formulated through EDIC this past year, namely to direct the attention of the economic defense community to materials and equipment which have major strategic importance because of new research and development. For example, EDIC early this year completed an evaluation of the developmental use of boron as a high-energy fuel. As you know, on 26 April the NSC determined that the denial of boron to the Bloc was an important US objective. This matter was brought to the attention of the NSC by the Secretary of Commerce on the basis of the information jointly developed by CIA and the Department of Defense in EDIC.
3. A new development indicates that high-energy fuels utilizing boron substances will provide substantially greater increases in the range and/or speed of aircraft. US development programs for high-energy fuels indicate that consumption of boron in the new uses will be greatly increased and, under full military operational conditions, could exceed current US output of boron for all purposes. There is evidence that Soviet scientists are in agreement with the technical and research side of this new development. The USSR does not now appear to be in a position to produce boron substances from domestic resources in quantities sufficient to meet military operational requirements. Bloc imports of boron materials, principally from Turkey, increased from approximately 12,000 tons in 1954 to 25,000 tons in 1955.

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4. Subsequent to the evaluation of the emerging importance of boron, SDIC set up a Working Group on Propellants and Fuel Additives for the study of other materials of possible significance to the development of high-energy fuels.

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OCh/c/25X1A9a :ack/8632 (11 June 1956)

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